

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A system for automating the testing of optical fiber comprising:
 - at least one automated test station adapted to guide a first end of the optical fiber which is stored on a storage spool to a first testing device and perform a test on the optical fiber; and
 - an automated conveyor system adapted to transport the optical fiber storage spool to the test station.
2. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said at least one test station is further adapted to:
 - strip a coating from the first end of the optical fiber.
3. (original) The system of claim 2 wherein said at least one test station is further adapted to:
 - strip the coating from a second end of the optical fiber; and
 - guide the second end of the optical fiber to the first testing device.
4. (original) The system of claim 2 wherein said at least one test station is further adapted to:
 - cleave the first end of the optical fiber.
5. (original) The system of claim 4 wherein said at least one test station is further adapted to:
 - clean the first end of the optical fiber.
6. (original) The system of claim 4 wherein said at least one test station is further adapted to:

acquire a sample length of the optical fiber; and
perform the test on the sample length of the optical fiber.

7. (original) A system for automating the testing of optical fiber comprising:

a spool upon which the optical fiber is wound;
a first station adapted to automatically:
strip a coating from a first end and a second end of the optical fiber;
cut the first end and the second end of the optical fiber;
a second station which includes a first testing device, one of said first or second stations adapted to:
guide the first end and the second end of the optical fiber to the first testing device;
perform a first test on the optical fiber; and
an automated conveyor system adapted to transport the spool from the first station to the second station.

8. (original) The system of claim 7 wherein:

the first station is further adapted to clean the first end and the second end of the optical fiber; and

the second station is further adapted to cleave the first end and the second end of the optical fiber.

9. (original) The system of claim 7 wherein the second station is further adapted to:

pull the first end and the second end of the optical fiber;
cut a first length of optical fiber from the first end;
cut a second length of optical fiber from the second end; and
discard the first length and the second length.

10. (original) The system of claim 7 wherein:
the first test comprises determining a measurement of the optical attenuation of the optical fiber using optical time domain reflectometry.

11. (original) The system of claim 7 wherein:
the first test comprises determining a measurement of the optical dispersion of the optical fiber.

12. (original) The system of claim 7 further comprising:
a pallet for carrying the spool;
a radio frequency (RF) tag attached to the pallet adapted for containing data, the data including spool identification data, test processing instructions, and test results; and
a plurality of RF tag devices located adjacent to the automated conveyor system adapted to read data from and write data to the RF tag.

13. (original) The system of claim 7 further comprising:
a third station adapted to:
acquire a test sample length of the optical fiber;
guide the test sample length of the optical fiber to a second testing device; and
perform a second test on the test sample length of optical the optical fiber;
wherein the automated conveyor system is further adapted to transport the spool from the second test station to the third test station.

14. (original) A system for automating the testing optical fiber, the optical fiber including a first end and a second end, the system comprising:
a spool upon which the optical fiber is wound;
a first test station, the first test station adapted to:
manipulate the first end and the second end of the optical fiber;
guide the first end of the optical fiber to a first testing device;
perform a first test on the optical fiber;
a second test station, the second test station adapted to:

acquire a test sample length of the optical fiber;
guide the test sample length to a second testing device;
perform a second test on the test sample length of optical fiber; and
an automated conveyor system adapted to transport the spool from the first test station to the second test station.

15-23 (canceled)

24. (previously presented) A method for automating the testing of optical fiber comprising the steps of:

transporting an optical fiber storage spool which stores a length of optical fiber to a first test station by an automated transportation system;

acquiring a sample length of the optical fiber from the spool by a testing apparatus;

guiding the sample length of the optical fiber to an optical fiber tester by the testing apparatus; and

testing the sample length of the optical fiber by the optical fiber tester.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, after the step of acquiring a sample length, further comprising the steps of:

stripping the coating from at least one end of the sample length of optical fiber by the testing apparatus;

cleaving the at least one end of the sample length of the optical fiber by the testing apparatus; and

cleaning the at least one end of the sample length of the optical fiber by the testing apparatus.

26. (original) The method of claim 24, after the step of testing the sample length, further comprising the step of:

discarding the sample length of the optical fiber.

27. (original) The method of claim 24, further comprising, after said testing step, transporting said fiber spool to a second test station.

28-47 (canceled)

48. (original) A method of testing a spool of optical fiber:

placing the spool of optical fiber onto a pallet such that a first end and a second end of the optical fiber extend outward in such a manner as to provide easy access to both the first end and the second end;

transporting the pallet to a test station;

pulling the first end of the optical fiber to a test device such that a first length of optical fiber is unwound from the spool;

pulling the second end of the optical fiber to the test device such that a second length of optical fiber is unwound from the spool; and

testing the optical fiber wound onto the spool.

49. (original) The method of claim 48 wherein:

the step of pulling the first end of the optical fiber does not disturb the second end of the optical fiber.

50. (original) The method of claim 48 wherein:

the step of pulling the second end of the optical fiber does not disturb the first end of the optical fiber.

51. (original) The method of claim 48 further comprising the steps of:

cutting a portion of the first length of optical fiber pulled from the spool; and

cutting a portion of the second length of optical fiber pulled from the spool.

52. (original) A method of testing a spool of optical fiber:

placing the spool of optical fiber onto a pallet such that a first end of the optical fiber extends outward in such a manner as to provide easy access to the first end;

transporting the pallet to a test station;

pulling the first end of the optical fiber to a test device such that a first length of optical fiber is unwound from the spool;

cutting a sample length of the first end of the optical fiber;

guiding the sample length of optical fiber to a test device; and

performing a test on the sample length of optical fiber.